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Minutes, May 2002

Minutes of ABAC meeting May 6, 2002

Voting members present: Jack Johnson, Ted Packard, Christopher Tonkin, Stephan Miller, Scott Smith, and Ron Sender.
Members at large: Alan McClenen, Jr., Bruce Lederer, Joey Glushko, and Doug Greenfield.

The meeting was called to order at 7:36pm.

Jack Johnson presented a plaque of appreciation to Alan McClenen, Jr., on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the building of the Minuteman Bikeway and the release of the updated bikeway brochure and website. Alan responded by praising the accomplishments of the Bicycle Committee.

We voted unanimously to accept the minutes of the last meeting with some corrections.

Discussion of recent events.

Bike parking warrant article. We discussed the possible reasons for the failure of the bike parking warrant article to obtain a two-thirds vote at Town Meeting (TM). It was suggested that because the article was presented very near the beginning of the first session, it was not fairly considered. Alan McClenen suggested that it could be reconsidered perhaps even later this spring as Town Meeting plans to recess until some time in June. It is also possible that there will be special sessions later in the year and the article could be reconsidered then.

If the article is reintroduced at the regular TM, it must be in the same form. If it is reintroduced at a special session later in the year, we can reword it. Several members suggested that it might be helpful to enlist the support of a member of the Chamber of Commerce. We decided to contact Beth Ryan who is a member of both the Chamber and TM. Scott volunteered to make the contact. Bruce suggested that we should get together some promotional materials that could be handed out to TM members before the vote.

Bike-Arlington Tour. Scott declared that the BIKE-Arlington Tour held on May 5 was an awesome success. Stephan counted 75 riders at the beginning of the Tour. Ron reiterated that it was good that the route that we worked out avoided riding much on Mass Ave. because of the number of small children that participated.

Stephan mentioned that the police left the intersections and crossing sites too soon leaving a few riders stranded without an escort. Chris commented that some people parked at Trader Joe's and then had to carry their bikes down the stairs and across the path to the field. Jack added that the extended tour led by Bryce Nesbitt was informative. In conclusion, Jack declared this year's Tour an excellent team effort.

New bikeway brochure. Jack unveiled the finished Minuteman Bikeway brochure that he has worked so hard on. It is larger, more informative, and more colorful than the previous version. Jack also announced that the accompanying web site is up and running. We all felt that the committee and the town owe a strong vote of thanks to Jack for all the hard work he put into the brochure. Jack asked our help in distributing it to local museums, bike shops, and other outlets.

Community liaison updates.

TAC. Scott gave us an update on the proceedings of the Arlington Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). TAC is reviewing the town wide transportation assessment study as well as the Mass. Ave. corridor study. Scott is arranging a series of three meetings for deciding which of the two possible plans will be implemented. The two plans present three possibilities: 0) do nothing, 1) the three lane plan and 2) the four lane plan. Scott suggested that one or more of us should attend these meetings to represent the bicycling community as they will be deciding issues of bicycle and pedestrian accommodation. Scott also suggested that ABAC might want to take a position on how bikes are accommodated. Jack suggested that we take the matter up at next month's meeting.

Bedford Friends of the Bikeway annual meeting. Stephan and Jack attended the meeting last month. The highlight was a talk by Tim Baldwin, the Executive Director of MassBike. Tim told Jack that MassHighway was installing bicycle friendly look detectors (good) together with signs reading stop for green light (bad). ABAC is on record as unanimously opposing the wording of these signs.

Open Space Committee. Jack gave a brief update on the last meeting. In addition, the Conservation Commission wishes to restrict bikes to designated paths on town conservation land. ABAC has no objection to this policy.

Friends of Spy Pond Park. Jack was contacted by the Friends asking for help in some of their projects. We concluded that ABAC's interest in the pond area should be limited to erosion and vegetation around the bike path.

Kids on Wheels. They are considering a number of sites for this year's (possible) festival. They are planning mostly for younger children and not focusing on bicycle riding. Stephan asked if there was going to be a police sponsored bike rodeo this year. The answer is probably not.

Minuteman bikeway maintenance.

Excavation, repair, and paving of the bikeway could begin as early as next week. Jack and Ron will be meeting tomorrow with Rich Bento to advise on scheduling and plans for detours during construction. Scott suggested leaflets be distributed at the Alewife Station warning of detours and closure. Christopher and Ron wondered how close to Alewife the paving will go. There were concerns voiced about how the Spy Pond embankment would be remediated.

Bikeway connections.

Bryce Nesbitt informed Jack that the proposed Alewife path has hit a major snag. It was thought that the entire right of way was owned by the MDC or the MBTA. It turns out that a portion near Alewife Station is owned privately by the Boston and Maine Railroad. The railroad has plans to develop the site so they are unlikely to turn it over to the state for free.

Upcoming events.

Bike Week, Metro-Boston. For a calendar of local Bike Week events visit the MassBike web site.

5th annual Bike-Valet Parking Block Party for Bike Week will take place at Redbone's on May 13.

ABAC dinner get-together will take place on Monday May 24 also at Redbone's.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:24pm.